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The greatest single strength of an admissions program is carefully developed institutional policy on the admission of foreign students which has the wholehearted support of the top level of the administration. Only then can the admissions program maintain reasonably and realistically high standards. Standards of admission should be reassessed periodically by an appropriate committee of the college or university which includes both an Admissions Officer and the Foreign Student Adviser. Standards should be sought which are both flexible enough to attract a foreign student enrollment, and rigid enough to maintain the academic integrity of the institution and the prestige of American education abroad. Whether the institution is large with elaborate processes and specialized personnel or small with simple procedures and limited staff, the objective is the same: to admit foreign students who have the academic, financial, and linguistic abilities to complete their educational objectives successfully, and who will benefit from what the institution has to offer. Once standards are developed in support of general institutional policy, the success of the admissions program will lie in the hands of the admissions personnel involved, including the Foreign Student Adviser. Their cooperation and sharing of responsibility and concern are basic to the success of the admissions program. (Author)

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# *Guidelines*

## SELECTION AND ADMISSION OF FOREIGN STUDENTS

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# SELECTION AND ADMISSION OF FOREIGN STUDENTS

## INTRODUCTION

This *Guideline* on the "Selection and Admission of Foreign Students" is the first in a series of eight sections, each of which deals with a specific area of service to foreign students. Because it leads off the series, the objective of this particular section is somewhat different from subsequent sections. It will attempt to cover not only the many aspects relevant to its title, but will also include consideration of the basic commitment to international education implicit in an institution's decision to admit and enroll foreign students. It should, therefore, be of interest to a variety of readers. Insofar as it treats foreign student admissions practices and procedures at both large and small institutions, it is meant for Admissions Officers and Registrars. But it is also intended for administrative policy makers whose support and recognition of institutional responsibility are prerequisite to the total foreign student program. *It is, finally, written for the Foreign Student Adviser whose position as coordinator of the foreign student program marks him as the central liaison person in the education of foreign students at American institutions.* It is meant to be both a specific guide to Admissions and a general "guideline" to the rationale behind this and other services described in subsequent sections.

## THE BACKGROUND

For institutions of higher learning in the United States, whether large or small, private or public, the numbers of inquiries and applications received from foreign students every year are approaching the hundreds and thousands. Statistics alone indicate that the process of foreign student selection and admission, on both the undergraduate and the graduate levels, has become an operation of major proportions for American colleges and universities. More and more American institutions previously uninvolved in international educational exchange are being approached by foreign applicants. The sheer magnitude of handling inquiries, let alone formal application processing, requires a sophistication and efficiency of operation not imagined a few decades ago. To achieve this, *a clearly thought out institutional policy on foreign student enrollment is essential.*

## INSTITUTIONAL POLICY

An institution's overall policy on foreign student enrollment and programs is expressed by its admissions policy. An effective admissions policy should be the result of a careful calculation of the institution's desire and ability to serve the educational interests and needs of foreign students. The decision to admit foreign students must be based on a firm institutional commitment to the principles of international education. A realistic assessment of the institution's educational interest in foreign students should start with a determination of the institution's present capabilities and resources. Then, a long-range estimate of its ability to serve the growing numbers of foreign applicants that can be expected in the future should be made.

The institution's financial ability to cover both present and long-term implications of any policy decision is critical and must be taken into account. This is especially true for smaller colleges where the special facilities and services required for an effective foreign student program may be more difficult to project and de-

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velop. Policy should both reflect and anticipate resources. The high cost of those resources, especially at smaller institutions, should be weighed against the contribution that a foreign student enrollment is expected to make.

*In short, the decision to admit and enroll foreign students should be taken by the institution only after it has carefully studied its own educational standards and objectives as applied to foreign students. This is a serious responsibility.*

## DETERMINING POLICY

Although the determination of policy must be an independent decision for each institution in light of its own particular situation, nature, and objectives, the following questions may prove helpful in reviewing the institution's potential for a foreign student program:

1. What academic objectives of foreign students and their countries can the institution satisfy?
2. At what levels of admission and for what periods of time is the institution prepared to educate foreign students (undergraduate vs. graduate students; full-time vs. part-time students; special student status, etc.)?
3. What maximum number or proportion of foreign students can reasonably be served?
4. What specific services to foreign students is the institution prepared to offer or develop (such as housing assistance, English language instruction, orientation, etc.)?* Is there an adequately staffed Foreign Student Adviser's Office to coordinate these services?
5. What resources are available for financial assistance?**
6. What contribution does the institution expect foreign students to make to the campus and the community?
7. Can an effective foreign student program be developed without compromise of present or future educational goals and standards of the institution?

## ADMISSIONS PRACTICES

### Organization and Operation:

Once an overall institutional policy on the admission of foreign students has been set, the Admissions Office generally becomes the agent which implements the policy of the university or college. There is substantial variation among institutions in the operation of foreign student admissions procedures. Some universities have adopted the practice of using a Committee on Foreign Student Admissions. This Committee often includes the Admissions Officer, the Foreign Student Adviser, the Financial Aids Officer, and undergraduate or graduate deans or the Dean of Students and several faculty members, as relevant. Whatever the administrative structure, it is urged that the Foreign Student Adviser be involved in the foreign admissions operation at least as a consultant, because he can often contribute special information and expertise on the applicant as a *foreign* student.

## PREPARATION FOR SELECTION: DISSEMINATING INFORMATION ABROAD

The word "selection" has two meanings in the admissions context. The first refers to selection by the prospective foreign student of an American institution

*Cf. relevant *Guidelines* sections.

**Cf. Section on Finances and Financial Aid, page 10.

of higher learning. The second meaning of the word "selection" refers to the institution's encouragement of the type of student it wishes to enroll, as set by its policy on foreign student admissions.

To assist foreign applicants in the total selection process, many colleges and universities disseminate information abroad by regularly supplying overseas educational information centers, and counseling and screening agencies (both foreign and American, governmental and private) with up-to-date copies of their bulletins or catalogues. Full use should be made of overseas agencies that exist for this purpose.* Some institutions also send copies to the Cultural Affairs Officer at American embassies. Other institutions prefer to work through their own exchange faculty or administrative personnel, or through returned foreign alumni and friends.

The Foreign Student Adviser must take the initiative in encouraging his institution to develop procedures and information for dissemination abroad that are in keeping with both its policy and its resources. The most economical and efficient way to do this is to develop special informational materials for foreign applicants, prepared jointly by the Foreign Student Adviser and the Admissions Office.

## SPECIAL INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS FOR APPLICANTS

In the interests of efficient use of both the foreign applicant's and the institution's time and resources, most colleges and universities have developed special air weight, slim brochures or leaflets which they send in response to the initial inquiry from the student. Preferably, such informational materials should include:

1. brief history or description of the institution, including location, climate, etc.;
2. statement of the institution's policy on the admission of foreign applicants;
3. curricula and degrees offered;
4. admissions application procedures;
5. academic calendar, giving dates of enrollment;
6. *complete* costs of attending school: tuition, room and board, books, incidentals, vacation and summer expenses, and all other normal costs;
7. financial aid policy;
8. English facility requirement;
9. test for ability in English and other required tests;
10. housing facilities for graduate and undergraduate foreign students;
11. employment regulations and opportunities;
12. visa and other legal regulations;
13. special foreign student services available; and
14. preliminary application form.

The preliminary application form merits further mention. Its basic purpose is to simplify the task of both the student and the Admissions Office in reaching a tentative decision. Most institutions that have developed their own preliminary application forms ask for only enough information *from the student* to permit the

*Cf. Fact Sheet.

Admissions Office to determine whether the student should be encouraged to submit a *complete* application with the supporting documents and school records. It is the information which the student himself provides, rather than documents and records, that constitutes the basis for a preliminary decision. The preliminary application form thus eliminates the need to collect all the academic records of the applicant until an initial assessment of his basic eligibility has been made. Many institutions, especially those enrolling large numbers of foreign students, use this technique selectively.

Some institutions attach their preliminary application form to the informational brochure or leaflet, as a tear-off sheet. Many smaller institutions make use of the special form created by the Institute of International Education and entitled, "Request for Application Material From U.S. Colleges and Universities." This form may be purchased from the Institute by U.S. institutions in quantity.*

Several institutions have streamlined the operation by condensing the information for prospective students from abroad *and* the preliminary application form into a pre-paid (.11¢) self-sealing aerogramme.** In the long run, this solution may prove both more efficient and more economical.

However, institutions financially unable to develop their own informational brochures can again turn to the Institute of International Education, which has developed small, easy to mail bulletins on the various types of United States schools. Any U.S. institution may use these. The bulletins are available from the Institute* on "The Liberal Arts College in the U.S.A.," "Graduate Study in the U.S.," "The Two-Year College in the U.S.," "The Land-Grant College and the State University in the U.S." These bulletins would meet most of the needs for specialized information. For institutions with small foreign student enrollments or restricted finances, the use of these bulletins, in combination with the IIE preliminary application form, should place the selection and information process within the realm of the possible.

In all communications with foreign applicants, whether in specialized bulletins, catalogues, or on the application form itself, major emphasis should be placed on both foreign admissions policy and financial aid policy. The *cost* of education in an American institution should be stressed at every available occasion.*** For applicants intending to bring their spouses or families, the high cost of living in the United States should be stressed.

## A MODEL OF THE ADMISSIONS PROCEDURE

There are certain steps which should be taken in the foreign admissions procedure. A "model" that outlines the steps from the initial inquiry to a final admissions decision is presented in the following pages. The model is, admittedly, an ideal one. It points out what kinds of information about the foreign student are needed to arrive at an admissions decision. At smaller institutions where resources, staff, and time are limited, the model will have to be adapted to the particular institution's capabilities.

*Cf. Fact Sheet.

**The University of Washington in Seattle, Washington,and Oregon State University in Corvallis, Oregon, are recommended examples.

***Finances and Financial Aid section, page 10.

The model incorporates the following special forms and documents to describe a *complete* foreign application:

1. preliminary application form (optional but *recommended*)
2. final application form
3. the school record
4. *confidential* letters of recommendation
5. statement of financial status
6. health certificate
7. test results, with emphasis on English proficiency
8. interview report (optional)
9. sponsor's statement, where relevant

If an institution *must* make choices, it is urged that the priorities include #2, #3, #5, #6, and #7.

*Step 1*. When a letter of inquiry is received by the institution, it should be forwarded to *one central office* (presumably the Admissions Office) which screens all letters of inquiry from abroad. Any other persons or departments receiving such inquiries should forward them to this central office for follow-up.* Recipients of inquiries other than the central office should be urged to do nothing more than acknowledge the inquiry and indicate that it has been referred to the proper office which will reply. A carbon copy of this acknowledgment should go to the central office.

*Step 2*. The central office should make the decision as to which kinds and how much information should be sent to the student. This may be determined on the basis of what he has already revealed about himself, his educational objectives, and his interest in the institution (for example, a specific graduate program in a given academic field). The special informational brochure, described earlier, should be forwarded. A preliminary application form may also be sent at this time. This preliminary correspondence can usually be satisfactorily handled through an air-mail weight form letter or an aerogramme. The reply may vary for the type of student (undergraduate vs. graduate). It is *not* recommended that an application blank be sent at this time unless the information about the student is complete enough to warrant the encouragement that enclosing an application blank implies. However, the preliminary application should request the student's statement of the following:**

1. school record;
   a. subject studied, chronologically, or by field;
   b. grades earned and rank in class, if available;
   c. examinations (school, state, national) passed and dates; and
   d. diplomas, certificates, degrees earned and dates;
2. statement of financial capability and resources; indication of needs; and
3. proposed program of study in the United States (field and level), if not already given in letter of inquiry.

*Cf. Section on Graduate Admissions, page 11.

**Some institutions require return of ten international postal coupons to help bear the cost of overseas postage.

*Step 3*. When returned, the preliminary application may indicate clearly that the student is not qualified to enter the institution, and the correspondence can then be terminated. At this point, in cases of decision to terminate the processing, some institutions have initiated the practice of referring the foreign student to other American institutions when their own program either does not fit the needs of the applicant or is already filled. The referral step may have to be delayed until more complete information is submitted.

*Step 4*. If the student seems qualified and is to be encouraged, the applicant's file should be complete enough at this point for the persons or Committee authorized to admit foreign students to decide whether or not the student is *eligible* for admission. This is *not* tantamount to admission itself. If judged affirmatively, the foreign student can then be sent the following forms and be asked to submit or arrange for the submission of the still missing items, including:

1. special foreign student application (final) form, asking:†
   a. citizenship;
   b. date and place of birth;
   c. personal history (work experience, military service, publications), preferably in the form of a personal statement or brief essay;
   d. educational objectives;
   e. vocational or professional goals; and
   f. visa held, applied for, or expected; if "J", give name of sponsor and program number;
2. certified copies or originals of relevant school records and diplomas;
3. confidential letters of recommendation (from persons selected by the applicant, preferably from teachers, principal; or dean, and structured for comments on English proficiency, academic ability and potential);
4. results of required tests,* including: (through official channels)
   a. English language proficiency test—TOEFL preferable and recommended; consular certification may supplement, but should not be accepted as a substitute;
   b. Scholastic Aptitude Test and/or achievement tests for undergraduate applicants;
   c. Graduate Record Examination for graduate applicants.
5. confidential interview report—optional; most widely used for sponsored students**;
6. statement from the sponsor, where relevant.

With regard to tests, it is the responsibility of the American institution to inform the foreign applicant precisely which tests are required of him, where and when he may take them, how and where he can apply for and arrange to complete the tests (including the "last date" when tests may be taken), and the costs of each test. The Admissions Officer or Committee should also have a clear idea as to what use is to be made of the test results and how they are to be interpreted.

Care should be taken that all documents submitted are certified originals or certified photostatic copies, indicated by an official school or governmental seal.

†Although some of this information will have been given in the preliminary application, it is important to have it on the final application form. Smaller institutions may wish to purchase the final forms available through the Institute of International Education.

*Cf. Fact Sheet on Tests.

**Cf. Fact Sheet.

Letters of reference can be checked for legitimacy by a simple postcard acknowledgment to the writer. If the credentials submitted are not in English, an accurate and authoritative translation can be required through a notary public or some official overseas translation service.

*Step 5.* When the file of the applicant is complete, the Admissions Officer or Committee is then prepared to evaluate the student's credentials and make a decision to admit or reject.*

*Step 6.* The applicant and/or the sponsoring agency is notified as to acceptance or refusal. Carbon copies of all letters of acceptance should be sent to the Foreign Student Adviser and, if relevant, to the appropriate academic department heads or other officers (such as the bursar). A slightly different procedure, involving one or more intermediate steps, is required for the graduate student if the final decision is to be left to the graduate dean or head of department.**

It may be appropriate in some situations for the Foreign Student Adviser to sign all letters of admission or rejection and, if admitted, the visa eligibility certificates (form I-20 or DSP-66).† The Foreign Student Adviser could then be responsible for determining the candidate's competence in English and financial reliability.

The final decision to admit or refuse a student should always be the result of a careful review of the academic preparation of the applicant and of the ability of the institution to serve his needs and tentative objectives. All awards of scholarships or assistantships should be handled simultaneously by the appropriate persons (the Foreign Student Adviser acting on behalf of an Admissions Committee) as the college or university policy permits. The terms of any financial awards should be clearly stated.‡ The candidate may be asked to reply by a specified date as to whether or not he will accept the offer of admission. He can also be told that his "admission" will be marked "cancelled" for the term to which he is applying if he does not respond.

In accepting an offer of admission, it would be appropriate for the candidate to inform the Admissions Officer, department head or the Foreign Student Adviser that he intends to enroll, giving an approximate date of his arrival on campus. This information should then be relayed to the appropriate offices within the institution.

All extra information on the institution and its services to foreign students (like housing arrangements, orientation programs, conditions of employment, visa regulations, etc.) can be sent at this time.

*Step 7.* If the applicant is found to be academically acceptable but there is serious question as to his competence in English or his sources of financial support, then it is recommended that he be sent a formal "admissible" letter. *The visa eligibility certificates (I-20 or DSP-66) are not issued to the candidate at this time.*

*Cf. Criteria for Evaluating the Applicant's Records, page 8; Resources, page 9.

**Cf. Section on Graduate Admissions Practices, page 11.

†The form I-20 eligibility certificate enables the student to apply for a student (F) visa. This type of visa is generally held by non-sponsored students.

The Exchange Visitor program enables the college or university to extend the student a DSP-66 visa eligibility certificate to apply for an exchange visitor (J) visa. This form can be issued by any university or private agency who has received approval of its specific program from the Department of State. While policies may vary it is a general procedure for most universities to issue this form when financial remuneration is offered to the student.

For clarification about immigration regulations refer to Handbook for Foreign Student Advisers, Part Five, Section A, "Immigration Regulations," Leland H. Cooper, Forrest G. Moore, Peter S. Mousolite, M. Robert B. Klinger, Third Revision January, 1962, or consult the nearest Immigration and Naturalization Service Office.

‡Cf. Section on Finances and Financial Aid, page 10.

This letter should state that, based on a review of his academic credentials, he is judged to be prepared to undertake the degree or special program for which he has applied, but that certain conditions (such as competence in English, financial resources, general health) have not been adequately documented to the admitting officer and/or the Foreign Student Adviser or particular committee. It should be clearly indicated that these are the reasons why the visa eligibility certificates are being withheld. A reply date should again be employed, stating that the candidate's "admissibility" will be withdrawn if no response is received.

The procedures mentioned in *Step 6* should then be followed if all the conditions are met which would permit the candidate to enroll by the appropriate date of the term to which he was admitted.

## FACTORS IN THE EVALUATION OF THE APPLICANT'S BACKGROUND

It is an arduous task to master the skill required in foreign student credential evaluation. Such skill requires, ideally, a thorough familiarity with the major educational systems of the world, as well as a deep understanding of American education as a basis for comparison. Only from long experience in the field is knowledge gained of foreign student credentials and their meaning in terms of American equivalents. The factors involved in an evaluation of a foreign student's background are the following:

1. the country's educational system and standards, in general;
2. the particular preparatory or secondary school, college, or university which the applicant has attended;
3. the meaning of the applicant's record, marks, certificates, or degrees in his own country; and
4. his academic potential as judged by his achievement in his country's educational system.

## CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING THE APPLICANT'S RECORDS

For the evaluation of the applicant's potential for a successful American educational experience, the following questions may be helpful in the development of criteria:

1. Does your institution offer a program that will suit the applicant's educational objectives; if not, can such a program be developed or arranged?
2. Does the applicant appear to have the necessary qualifications for the field he wishes to enter? (For example, would he be eligible to enter the appropriate level for such training in his own country?)
3. Does the applicant appear to possess the maturity and motivation necessary for success in an unfamiliar environment? (determined primarily from recommendations, interview reports, and personal statement on educational objectives from the applicant)
4. Does the applicant have adequate financial resources to maintain himself for the required period of study?*

*Cf. Finances and Financial Aid section, page 10.

5. Is he sufficiently skilled in the English language to pursue his academic objectives in competition with American students in his field? Will he be able to communicate effectively both in and out of class? Has his English ability been adequately confirmed through secure tests to the satisfaction of your institution's standards? If deficiencies are evident, can your institution either provide the necessary training to the student or arrange for intensive English language training at a special institute?

## RESOURCES IN EVALUATING FOREIGN STUDENT CREDENTIALS

An evaluation of the above factors, especially those relating to the student's academic background, is often difficult because one or more factors may be unpredictable, variable, or even unintelligible. Evaluation would be a formidable task if it had to be undertaken single-handedly. However, there are numerous resources and aids to which the Admissions Officer can turn. The first and most necessary is an adequate library of reference and resource materials. Many private and governmental agencies in the United States concerned with the foreign admissions field regularly prepare pertinent publications on foreign educational systems and on foreign student admissions considerations. A minimum bibliographical listing is appended. Where possible, these should be cross-filed in the Admissions and Foreign Student Adviser's Offices.

Other sources of aid in developing criteria for the evaluation of foreign student credentials might include:

1. the performance of other foreign students from the same country, especially those from the same preparatory institution;*
2. the experience of American professors who have taught or studied in the country in question, and of foreign scholars at your own or nearby institutions;
3. the knowledge of American professors of comparative education;
4. a direct request to the sending institution for suggestions as to the interpretation of grade values and rank in class;
5. use of returned alumni or friends overseas;
6. assistance in special instances from more experienced Admissions Officers or Foreign Student Advisers at neighboring institutions;**
7. inter-institutional cooperation in the region;** and
8. various screening and evaluating centers here and abroad.***

Certainly the Foreign Student Adviser can be a valuable and important resource in the foreign student admissions process. Hopefully he will be consulted or directly involved at every possible point in the flow of admissions procedures and actions. His general knowledge of the foreign student as a total personality should make him able to foresee the probable consequences of any admissions decision. The Foreign Student Adviser can thus be an essential link in the admissions chain, and his involvement and cooperation would strengthen the admissions program.

*Cf. Section on Follow-Up Evaluation, page 11.

**Cf. Section on Inter-Institutional or Regional Cooperation, page 13.

***Cf. Fact Sheet.

## TIMING OF THE ADMISSIONS PROCESS

It is not always feasible to have a fixed deadline for the submission of foreign student applications. It *is* important that foreign applications receive prompt processing upon receipt. Initial inquiries should be answered immediately, even if only with a postal card. If the institution does not or cannot at that time accept foreign students, a form letter to this effect should be sent promptly. If, on the other hand, the application is to be processed, adequate time should be allowed inasmuch as the procedure can often require several months. Individual processing of an application may be preferable for institutions with a small foreign student population. Many larger institutions which enroll substantial numbers of foreign students prefer an annual processing of applications. All correspondence should be by airmail.

## FINANCES AND FINANCIAL AID

Financial aid to foreign applicants usually takes the form of fellowships, scholarships, assistantships (for graduates), partial grants (for travel, maintenance, etc.), and tuition waivers or reductions. Most are renewable upon evidence of academic success. Many institutions will not consider awarding any form of financial aid to a foreign student until the student has successfully completed one or two semesters. Any such restriction should be carefully defined in all communications on finances and financial aid which are sent to foreign applicants and on the financial aid request form, if one is used. The fact that self-help in the form of full or part-time employment is subject to government regulations should also be made clear to the applicant at the same time. He should be warned that similar regulations may prevent dependents who accompany him from working.

For many non-sponsored foreign applicants, access to United States higher education depends on direct financial assistance. Some U. S. institutions therefore feel that they should not commit themselves to assisting foreign students financially unless they can offer funds sufficient to meet *all* reasonable monetary needs of the student or provide the total of the difference between his needs and his resources. If aid is given, the period and conditions of the award must be clearly defined.

In the case of a sponsored student with financial aid from such a source as his own or the U.S. government, a foundation, a national or international agency, a service club, or a church group, the sponsorship may be only partial and in fact may not be adequate to cover the cost of education at the institution or may fail to provide coverage for vacation periods. The Admissions Officer will need to know how the student expects to supplement his funds. The student should also explain how these funds are to be made available from the sponsor, how and by whom they are to be administered, and for how long such funds are to be available.

In order to determine the financial status and ability of both the non-sponsored and the sponsored foreign applicant, the admissions application form should request details from the applicant on both the specific sources of support (family, savings, home government, agency, etc.) and the exact amounts expected from each source.

Further, some American institutions require that the applicant, whether sponsored or not, post a bond or deposit in an American bank funds sufficient to cover one semester's or one year's tuition. In lieu of an actual deposit in an American bank, an institution may wish to require a financial certificate of non-sponsored applicants. To obtain such a certificate, the applicant must have his statement of his financial resources countersigned by a bank official.

As a final deterrent to guard against misrepresentation of funds available, a few institutions announce to their foreign applicants that the Foreign Student Adviser or the Admissions Officer will require a "financial review" with the foreign student after his arrival and prior to granting him permission to register. The student is warned that this action will be taken so as to impress upon him the seriousness of the whole financial question.

## RESTRICTIONS

Any restrictions or contingencies placed on the acceptance of the foreign applicant must be clearly stated to the applicant, his sponsor, and to concerned college or university officials, especially the Foreign Student Adviser and the academic adviser, when assigned. Presumably, restrictions would be most likely to occur in the areas of:

1. finances and financial aid, as described above;
2. admission classification—that is, whether the student is to be considered an undergraduate, a graduate, or a "special" student;
3. withholding of specific transfer credits earned at another institution until a semester of academic performance has been evaluated; and
4. further English language training and testing—the admitting institution should indicate the nature of the training required, and where, when, and at what additional cost, if any, it is available.

Any such restrictions should also appear on the visa eligibility certificate and in the formal letter of admission to the student.

## FOLLOW-UP EVALUATION OF ADMISSIONS DECISIONS

Most schools experienced in foreign student admissions regularly perform follow-up evaluations of their admissions decisions, both to determine the accuracy of the decisions and to provide a more objective basis for future action. The follow-up evaluation is more thorough and more efficient if it is a cooperative effort between the Foreign Student Adviser's Office and the Admissions Office.

This practice is recommended not only as a valuable method of evaluating and reviewing admissions policies, standards, and procedures, but also as a means of subsequently determining the appropriateness of advanced placement for certain highly qualified students or for those admitted with some temporary academic restriction. The follow-up evaluation will disclose whether or not an upward adjustment in placement is indicated.

## SPECIAL ADMISSIONS CONSIDERATIONS

### Graduate Admissions Practices

At many institutions of higher learning which enroll substantial numbers of foreign applicants at the graduate level, the common practice has been to reserve to the individual graduate departments and their deans the responsibility of selection and admission of graduate applicants. While it is understandable that each graduate school or department should wish to control its foreign enrollment, such "independence" often results in confusion, inefficiency, and possibly mistakes because graduate departments seldom have regular staff members who are admissions experts, or experienced credentials evaluators.

For this reason, it is strongly recommended that *some central office,* either the Foreign Student Office or the regular Admissions Office that handles undergraduate foreign applications, be involved in the graduate admission process at least at the level of basic and preliminary evaluation of the graduate applicant's credentials. It is in the area of determination of English language proficiency, financial needs and resources, and interpretation of the educational record that such a central clearing point can play an essential role.

When the basic qualifications of the applicant have been determined, the decision to admit or reject can be reserved to the graduate department or Dean concerned, based on the recommendation of the experienced foreign credentials evaluator, in cooperation with the Foreign Student Adviser.

It is more efficient if this same central clearing point is responsible for all initial communication with the graduate applicant, replies to his inquiries and requests for information, compiles his records into a file, evaluates his credentials, and then, once he has been admitted and enrolled by decision of the graduate school dean, maintains a crossfile on his performance at the institution. (The reader is referred back to the "Model of the Admissions Procedure.")

**Transfer Students**

A special problem in admission procedures is posed by the foreign student transferring from another U.S. institution. Generally, "transfer" students will be of three types:

1. those who have completed some amount of study in another American institution, but have not earned a B.A. or B.S. degree. (These would include junior college graduates);
2. those who have completed the bachelor's or higher degree and wish to transfer for graduate study, or a higher degree; and
3. those who have attended an institution offering specialized study in English as a foreign language.

All three of these types of foreign transfer students will have been granted visas on the basis of regular I-20 or DSP-66* forms issued by the original accepting institution. In the case of the first two categories, the admissions procedure should be substantially the same as for a regular "first time" foreign applicant. However, the following additional documents will be needed with the transfer student's application:

1. the student's reason for wishing to transfer; statement from the student on his educational objective at the new institution; explanation of curriculum or field change;
2. official transcripts from the transferring institution indicating courses taken, examinations passed, and grades earned;
3. an official indication of the student's rank in his class, if available;
4. confidential recommendations from officials at the transferring institution, including a reference from the Foreign Student Adviser, with comments on the student's motivation, strengths and weaknesses, his financial status and on what educational or vocational counseling he has received; if change of curriculum is involved, the reason for the change; and

*Cf. footnote on page 7.

5. *the original, certified, and authoritatively translated* set of credentials submitted to the first institution. If the institution will not release the original set, a copy of the credentials should be requested. In most cases, the student can provide another set of credentials. These should be carefully checked to see that all those forms, statements, records, etc., normally required for admission by the new institution are included. This is especially important in the area of English language proficiency and financial status.

Many institutions will not consider the application of a foreign transfer student until he has completed at least one full academic year of successful study at the previous institution. If the institution has a policy of not accepting *any* undergraduate transfer foreign students at all, this policy should be clearly stated in its catalogue or bulletin. Whether or not financial aid to transfer applicants is available should also be defined.

With regard to the third category of transfer foreign students, i.e., those on student visas and holding certificates issued by a language school, special attention should be given to the student's ability to carry at least the minimum full-time academic program. Standards and requirements should not be lowered unless the institution is prepared to help the student overcome any deficiencies.

### Walk-Ins and Students Not in Good Standing

The term "walk-in" is used to describe those foreign students who, by various means, have obtained an I-20 form and a visa through other channels and simply "appear" on a college campus requesting admission. Extreme caution should be used in considering the admissibility of such self-presented candidates. Regulations as strict as those applied to regular foreign applicants should be required of "walk-in" students. A review of their records should be undertaken with special attention to their completeness, accuracy, and authenticity. A letter of release from the institution that originally issued the I-20 can be required. Again, it is a disservice to both the student and the institution to relax standards simply because of the immediacy of the case.

"Not in good standing" is the phrase used to describe those students who have been dismissed from another American institution for academic or disciplinary reasons. The admission of this kind of student can be even more complicated. Care should be taken to discover why the student has been disqualified, what is the likelihood that he will succeed in another American institution, or whether he ought to continue his education in an American institution at all.

## SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

### The Inter-Institutional or Regional Approach to Admissions

There is a growing practice among institutions in some areas or regions of pooling their admissions know-how in order to develop more efficient admissions policies, practices, and procedures as they apply to foreign students. Some of the areas in which experiments are currently being conducted include:

1. regional admissions clearing houses*;
2. development of inter-institutional "field of study" evaluators (at the graduate level), or "country experts;" and
3. inter-institutional or regional English teaching centers.

*The Regional Council for International Education, based at the University of Pittsburgh, is considering this approach.

## A STRONG ADMISSIONS PROGRAM: SUMMARY

The greatest single strength of an admissions program is a carefully developed institutional policy on the admission of foreign students which has *the wholehearted support of the top level of the administration.* Only then can the admissions program maintain reasonably and realistically high standards. Standards of admission should be reassessed periodically by an appropriate committee of the college or university which includes both an Admissions Officer and the Foreign Student Adviser. Standards should be sought which are both flexible enough to attract a foreign student enrollment, and rigid enough to maintain the academic integrity of the institution and the prestige of American education abroad.

Whether the institution is large with elaborate processes and specialized personnel or small with simple procedures and limited staff, the objective is the same: to admit foreign students who have the academic, financial, and linguistic abilities to complete their educational objectives successfully and who will benefit from what the institution has to offer.

Once standards are developed in support of general insitutional policy, the success of the admissions program will lie in the hands of the admissions personnel involved, including the Foreign Student Adviser. Their cooperation and sharing of responsibility and concern are basic to the success of the admissions program.

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